

## THE NEW PLAYS

**Phyllis Neilson-Terry**  
**A Youthfully Charming Viola**  
 By CHARLES DARNTON.

Phyllis Neilson-Terry, daughter of Fred Terry and Julia Neilson, who brought over "The Boatswain's Boy" a few years ago, Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry came to us in "Twelfth Night" at the Liberty Theatre last night as the latest flower of the famous Terry family tree. This had its advantages as well as its burdens.

Phyllis, it is to be doubted whether,

without the family name and prestige, the young actress who has been appearing in London as "The Boatswain's Boy" would so easily have been presented to the American public as a "star" in spite of her undeniable talents and promise. To say more of her at this time would be misleading. Unquestionably she may lay claim to the material of which brilliant stars are made, yet the fact that her years have not permitted her the experience that can only come with time compels the statement that her histrionic powers are still rising in many respects.

While her coming is an interesting theatrical event, it is a question in my mind whether she has not been rushed over here before she is quite ready to stand by herself as a Shakespearean actress of first order.

However, immaturity of method has its own particular appeal, and because of it Miss Neilson-Terry was a youthfully charming Viola. I was in her marked crudities of pose and gesture, most of all, that she betrayed a certain lingering amateurishness. Her physical appearance, in itself, was strongly in her favor. In fact, she was the most convincingly boyish Viola I have seen, and aside from her gestures and occasionally awkward

poses she carried off the role with a gallant grace. Tall, slender and with a fair beauty crowned by hair that suggested the pale sun of spring she was a picture of which one never tired. Her many speeches to Olivia when Viola comes as an emissary of love for the Duke were delivered with true boyish scorn, while her soliloquy after the ring is sent to her was spoken with ease and naturalness. She read her lines as though they expressed thoughts that were passing through her mind for the first time. Her recital to the Duke went for little until she came to the passage "We men may say more, swear more, when the swarming humor of her reading won immediate recognition. Her charming voice was given further opportunity in a song snatched from the clow, "Come away, come away, death," which she sang beautifully.

The three versions of the play revealed the fact that uncommon liberties had been taken with Shakespeare, even to introducing an extra boy-cow, for all the world like "Uncle Tom's Cabin" with two Toms. The play was put into three acts, but with twelve scenes and the consequent waste there was no particular gain in time over other productions that have been given here. With more music than is usually heard in "Twelfth Night" and scenery that made the production a picture-play, it seemed as though Shakespeare-for-the-masses had been the chief aim.

After the star, it was the scenery by Joseph Urban that attracted most attention. It had a certain poster effect that gave it a decided touch of novelty, yet a sort of gray portico that was used even on the seacoast not only gave every scene a shut-in appearance but finally produced the impression of an affection. While the settings were interesting and effective in their color scheme, a little of this sort of thing goes a long way. After all nothing suits Shakespeare so well as a beautiful simplicity, and when the scene painter falls under the influence of Max Reinhardt it may be suspected in this case, we may be forgiven if we do not sub-

scribe to everything that is supposed to be "artistic." Except for the glowing pictures and the really beautiful star, the production was only mediocre. Henry F. Dixey restrained his natural buoyancy as Malvolio only to rob the character of its pompous, ridiculous air and its half-comic, half-tragic self-infatuation. The robust humor of Sir Toby Belch was only mildly suggested by Eben Plympton, while Walter Creighton was merely effeminate as Aguecheek. Once again Miss Jessie Busley brought high spirits to the role of Maria after the fashion she set at the New York Theatre, and if she wasn't strictly Elizabethan she was at least merry and danced about in her bare feet like a Trilby who had not even carpet shoes to fear. At the clown Cecil Cameron blew his own pipe instead of relying on a chap in the orchestra and he also sang very well—for that matter a bit better than he acted. Lawson Butts was an impossible Orsino who failed entirely to justify Viola's love, though Olivia's scorn for him was wholly comprehensible. Miss Edith Campbell Walker was a handsome Olivia, but she put very little heart into her role. For once, however, there was a Sebastian who might be mistaken for Viola, with the result that Reginald Goode not only acted like a brother but made the meeting in the final scene count as a really dramatic moment. To look like Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry is in itself an achievement.

At the Strand Theatre, with Gladys Hanson as the heroine, "Heating Back" is the six-reel offering at the Broadway Road Gardens Theatre. The picture tells the story of Al Jennings, former outlaw.

**IN BURLESQUE HOUSES.**  
 Sam Howe and his "Lovers" at the Columbia Theatre, gave a new burlesque called "In Russia." Mr. Howe's impersonation of the Czar of Russia and of a humorously drawn Hebrew character called Sam Fiffes kept the spectators laughing. He was ably assisted by Fred Nolan, the Countess Olga Rossi, Walter Weber, William Wyant, Bob Aiger, Adelaide Adair, Vera Desmond and Marjorie Adams. There was plenty of lively music and graceful dancing throughout the performance, together with a large chorus of pretty girls.

Jacobs and Jermans' "City Sports" in favor of the Olympic Theatre. The main feature was a burlesque called "Ladies' Man," with the scene laid in a lively part of Paris. Koler and Leavitt led in the funmaking and June Mills, Ruby Bay and Fannie Vedder sang and danced with an attractive chorus.

**PROCTOR VAUDEVILLE.**  
 At Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre the Pauline Fiedling Players led an excellent bill in a drama of the South entitled "The Rose of Virginia." Others were Sidney Jarvis in song and La Veen and company in "The Prince of Argolia." When the bill at this house changes on Thursday night the old-time favorite Charles Diamond will come back and play a genuine Irish harp.

At the Twenty-third Street Theatre Gertrude Arden and company headed a good bill. Charles Diamond and Miss Beatrice scored a hit with their harp and saxophone playing at the Fifty-eighth Street Theatre. The Four Heads were at the top of an entertaining bill at the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street Theatre.

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